

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5765

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, February 12, 2009

Title: An act relating to the fruit and vegetable district fund.

Brief Description: Regarding the fruit and vegetable district fund.

Sponsors: Senator Schoesler.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/12/09 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5765 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hatfield, Chair; Ranker, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Haugen, Morton and Shin.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: The Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Account contains fees collected by the Department of Agriculture to recover the costs of inspections or certifications of fruits and vegetables. These inspection fees are used to fund the Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program and are not subject to legislative appropriation.

Horticultural pest and disease boards are formed at the county level to do control work for pests that impact commercial fruit crops. The Department of Agriculture performs surveys to detect the presence of pests but the control work is performed by the local horticultural pest and disease boards.

There is concern about the impact that the apple maggot would have on the commercial fruit crop. Funds that have been previously transferred for this purpose have been expended. Authority is sought to transfer additional funds from the Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Account to the Agricultural Local Fund for disbursement to local horticultural pest and disease boards to do work to control infestations of apple maggot so that they do not affect commercially-produced apples.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): One hundred and fifty thousand dollars is transferred from the Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Account to the plant pest account within the Agricultural Local Fund. The amount transferred is to be derived from fees collected from state inspections of tree fruits and used solely for activities relating to the control of *Rhagoletis pomonella* (apple maggot) in district two. The transfer of funds is to occur by July 1, 2009.

Any funds unexpended by June 30, 2013, must be transferred back to the Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: These same industry-generated funds were originally allowed for use in controlling apple maggot in 1997. But those funds have been exhausted. Continuing control of apple maggot is vital to maintaining foreign markets. If that occurred, it would have a major impact on the state economy and the state's apple industry. County pest boards don't have sufficient funds to respond if there is a major problem in either the Yakima or Kittitas Valley.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Dave DeCharme, Yakima Valley Growers and Shippers Association; Mary Beth Lang, Department of Agriculture.